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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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HANDLING INDICATOR

TO : DEPARTMENT OF STATE

INFO : ADEN, AMMAN, ANKARA, BAGHDAD, BEIRUT, BONN FOR CINCUSABE, CAIRO, DAMASCUS, DHAHRAN, FRANKFURT FOR LINDSEY AIR STATION, ATTN: DSC INTELLIGENCE, IDCA, HEADQUARTERS USAREUR HEFLDELBERG, KARACHI, KHARTOUM, KUWAIT, LONDON, MOGADISCIO, RABAT, TAIZ, TEHRAN, TEL AVIV TRIPOLI, TUNIS, (POLAD CINCSTRIKE/CINCMEAFSA, COMIDEASTFOR, DIA, Amembassy JIDDA

DATE: June 14, 1966 CHUSMTM

SUBJECT: Monthly Review for Saudi Arabia - May, 1966

REF :

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I. FOREIGN RELATIONS

A. Saudi-UAR Relations

Nasser May Day Speech/Status of Kuwaiti
Mediation Offer/"Islamic Pact" Controversy/
Other Irritants

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/NE

INTERNAL AFFAIRS

GROUP 3 - Downgraded at 12-year intervals, not automatically declassified.

FORM
4-62 DS-323

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FOR DEPT. USE ONLY

☒ In ☐ Out

Drafted by:

Contents and Classification Approved by:

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REVIEWED BY *[Signature]* DATE *10/15/82*
RDS of XDS EXT. DATE *10/15/82*
TS AUTH. REASON(S) *[Signature]*
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS *[Signature]*
DECLASSIFIED *[Signature]* RELEASABLE
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B. DefensePage:

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Air Defense System/
 C-130 Aircraft/Mobility Modernization Program/
 National Guard Training/

III. US-SAUDI RELATIONS

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SUMMARYSECRET

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The contracts with the consortium of UK and US firms for sale of British interceptors and Hawk missiles to Saudi Arabia were signed in early May and two Hawker Hunter fighters arrived in Riyadh May 7. Two more C-130 aircraft arrived to augment the Saudis' transport inventory and the Minister of Defense indicated he would like to buy three additional C-130s. Proposals for a US vehicle package for a mobility modernization program were presented to the Minister Prince SULTAN May 11. Sultan also expressed interest in obtaining US technical assistance in building two Saudi naval bases. A formal request for US training of National Guard NCOs was also received.

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US-Saudi relations continued good. The President's invitation to King Faisal to visit the US in June was announced May 9. US statements reaffirming our opposition to the use or threat of force in the Middle East and visits to the Kingdom by CINCSOUTH/CINCPAC General ADAMS, the new COMIDEASTFOR Rear Admiral EASTWOLD, and two US Navy warships helped reassure the Saudis of our continued readiness to come to their aid in case of unprovoked aggression by the UAR. The only sour note struck during the month was the announcement of the US sale of aircraft to Israel which predictably aroused a negative Saudi reaction. Although the Saudi oral protest against this action was not published, and public commentary severely limited obviously on government orders, Saudi officials privately informed the Embassy that the announcement of the deal with Israel on the eve of his visit to the US was particularly embarrassing to the King.

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I. FOREIGN RELATIONS

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RAIKAL devoted several of his weekly al-Ahram editorials during May to attacks on Faisal and charges that Saudi Arabia's "reactionary" government was conspiring with the U.S. to use Islam as a weapon against Arab unity. UAR news media and pro-Nasser newspapers in Beirut also attacked Saudi Arabia for purchasing air defense equipment from the US and UK and tried to exploit the subsequent announcement that the US would sell aircraft to Israel to embarrass the Saudis.

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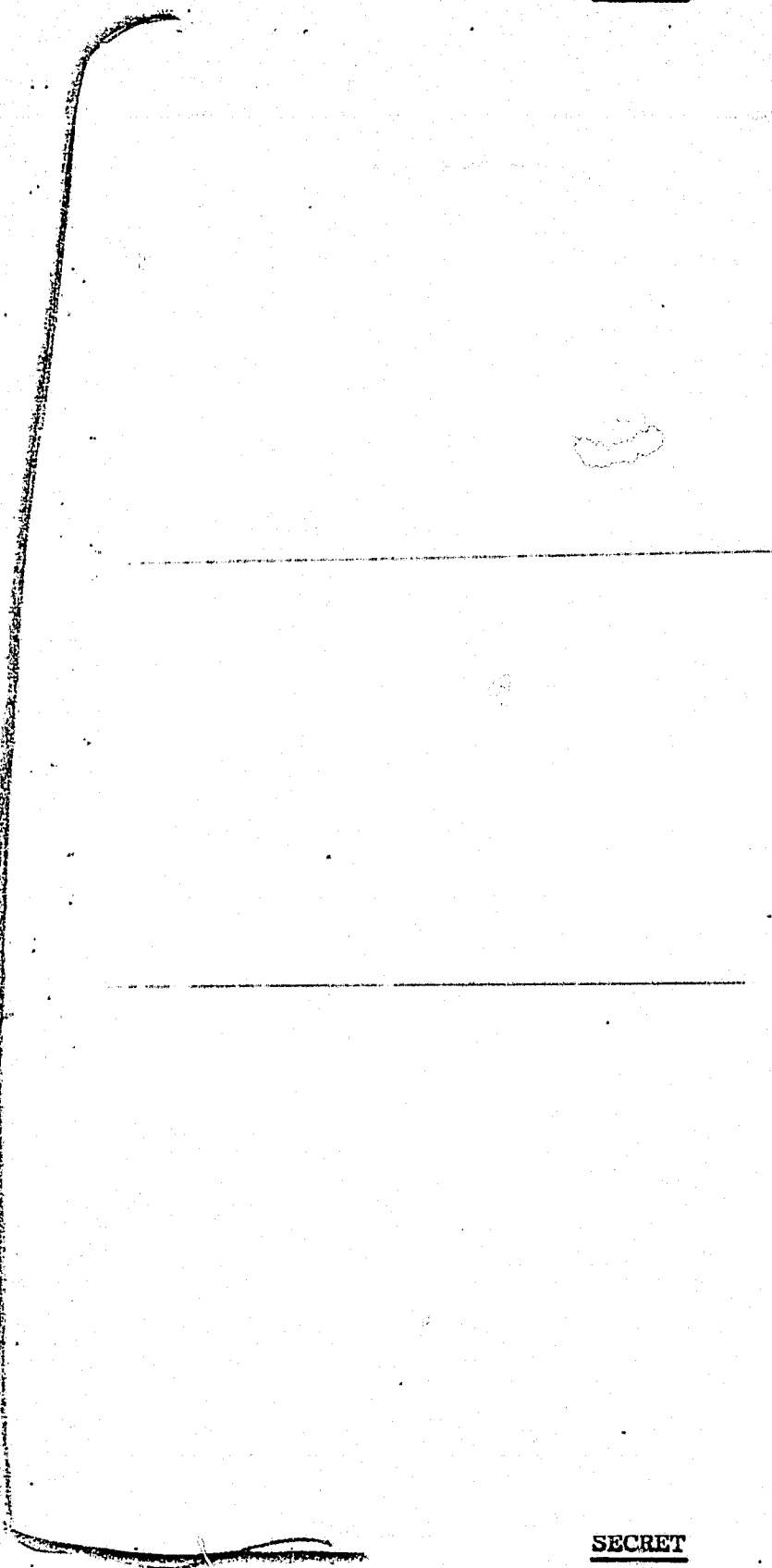
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Air Defense System. The long drawn out negotiations between the Saudi Government, on the one hand, and the US-UK air defense consortium on the other were successfully completed in early May. The contract with Raytheon, manufacturer of the Hawk, was signed May 4.

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During the visit of General Adams (see US-Saudi Relations below) May 9, Prince Sultan again pressed the US to furnish Saudi Arabia with a Hawk battery sometime before the scheduled delivery date of October. Both the Ambassador and General Adams confirmed that prospects for this were not good in view of other US commitments.

RELEVANT

C-130 Aircraft. The last two of four C-130 transport aircraft ordered under the contract with Lockheed Corporation signed June, 1965, arrived in Jidda May 25, having been flown from the US by Saudi pilots. Their arrival was well publicized by the Ministry of Defense and Aviation as a further step in the strengthening of Saudi Arabia's air defenses. Shortly thereafter, Prince Sultan informed the Ambassador that he would like to standardize the RSAF's air transport inventory by selling the five existing C-123s and purchasing three more C-130s.

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Mobility Modernization Program. In accordance with [redacted] urgent request to Secretary MCNAMARA last March for help in modernizing the Saudi Armed Forces vehicle fleet, the Ambassador and representatives from Department of Defense, DCS-LOG, USMTM, and the Corps of Engineers met with [redacted] May 11 in Riyadh to present the US package proposal. [redacted] was non-committal but requested that a high-level MODA committee review the US proposal along with those received from "other governments." (The

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British and possibly the French are believed to have made similar proposals.) On May 9 [] also made an urgent request that the US sell the Saudi Army fifty Jeep-mounted recoilless rifles with spares and ammunition.

National Guard Training. On May 5 the Embassy received from the Commander of the National Guard a formal request for CONUS training for twenty Guard non-commissioned officers. This request for training followed the earlier agreement for the sale of US arms to the National Guard, hitherto an exclusive British "preserve" so far as advisory and training assistance was concerned. The Department of Defense has been requested to prepare a program and cost estimates for this training which Guard officials hope can begin in September. Training recommended would include use and care of fire-arms, small unit tactics, general subjects, and English language.

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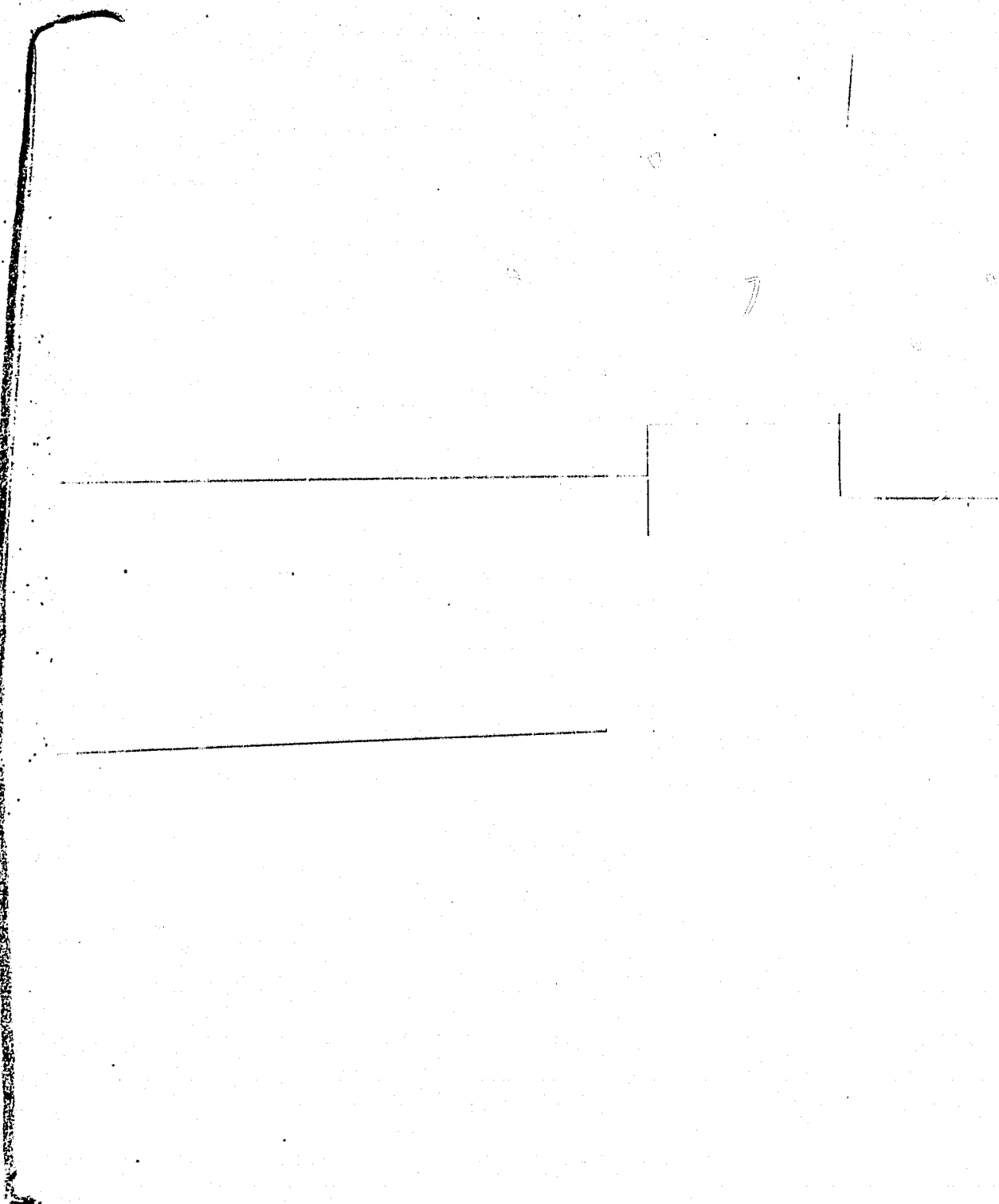
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SECRETIII. US-SAUDI RELATIONSA. Faisal Visit to US Announced

The White House and the Saudi Government on May 9 jointly announced that King Faisal had accepted an invitation from President JOHNSON to visit Washington beginning June 21. The King will be accompanied by an official party of nine, including Prince Sultan and Dr. Pharaon.

B. US Support for Saudi Security

Departmental Statements: Following Nasser's May 1 threats against Saudi Arabia, Embassy officers were frequently asked by Saudi contacts what actions the US planned to take to demonstrate its avowed interest in Saudi

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territorial integrity. The Saudis were pleased and apparently reassured by the Departmental spokesman's May 4 statement reiterating President KENNEDY's May 8, 1963 statement opposing the use of force or the threat of force to settle differences in the Middle East and by reaffirmation of the continued validity of the October 25, 1962 Kennedy letter to Faisal. At the same time, however, in conversations during the month with the King, Sultan, Pharaon, Saqqaf, and other Saudi officials, the Ambassador continued to urge the Saudis to avoid provocations along the Yemen border and to carry through with the Kuwaiti mediation offer.

CINCSTRIKE Visit. In the course of a tour of certain countries within his area of responsibility, General Adams, Commander in Chief, US Strike Command and US Forces, Middle East, Africa, and South Asia, visited Saudi Arabia May 8-10. In addition to discussions with Chief, USMTM, and members of his staff in Dhahran, General Adams and the Ambassador called on the King, Prince Sultan, and other Saudi officials May 9 in Riyadh. While there were no substantive discussions of bilateral military issues, the Embassy considered that General Adams' visit, well publicized by the Saudis, lent additional credibility to the Department's public reassurances of US support for Saudi security.

COMIDEASTFOR Visit. The new Commanding Officer, US Middle East Force, Rear Admiral Eastwold, visited Jidda May 22-25, meeting with both Prince Sultan and the Amir of Mecca, Prince MISH'AL bin Abd al-Aziz. Sultan expressed his pleasure that the accelerated schedule of COMIDEASTFOR destroyer visits to Saudi Red Sea ports will continue during June and July. During the Admiral's visit his flagship, the USS VALCOUR (AGF-1) called at Jidda Port. A destroyer, the USS CONY (DD-508), visited the port of Yenbu' May 17-20. Both visits made a good local impression and provided opportunities for the Navy to participate in athletic contests against Saudi military and civilian teams.

C. Reaction to Sale of US Aircraft to Israel

Although press and public comment was virtually nil, presumably as the result of Government orders to ignore the event, Saudi officials privately registered their dismay at the Department's May 20 announcement the US had agreed to sell combat aircraft to Israel. Official reaction, however, was confined to an oral protest to the Ambassador by Deputy Foreign Minister Saqqaf on May 25. Saqqaf pointed out that what particularly disturbed the Saudis was the timing of the US announcement soon after their own decision to purchase US and UK air defense equipment and shortly before the King's visit to the US. Saqqaf noted that "various Arab states" were trying to get Faisal to cancel his US trip in protest and warned that the Saudis might eventually have to publicize his protest to the Ambassador to protect themselves.

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By the end of May Saqqaf's oral protest still had not been made public. Nevertheless, the Saudis were demonstrating some sensitivity to Haikal's May 25 charges that Faisal could have prevented the US-Israeli deal by threatening US oil interests in Saudi Arabia and that, in buying US arms, the Saudis had given the US an excuse to sell arms to Israel. In an article published May 30, Nihad al-Ghadiri replied that Saudi arms purchases were made solely in conformance with Arab Summit and United Arab Command recommendations. Ghadiri added if the UAR is, as Haikal and other Egyptian spokesmen have declared, the leader of the revolutionary vanguard in the Middle East, then Cairo, not Riyadh, should take the lead in adopting a strong stand toward the US. This whole issue, Ghadiri sniffed, was simply another pretext for attacking Saudi Arabia.

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